



VERMILION CATHOLIC

a legacy of Mount Carmel

VC Family,

Our faith is often a comforting thing - an all-powerful, all-loving God who literally died to save us, what could be more comforting? At the same time, it's also a risky thing. That salvation requires a strong denial of the world and many of our own desires. The love that moved God is a love of self-gift and it can be risky to give yourself to a broken person and a broken world. But we know it's worth it because Christ did it first.

So, I invite you and your children to consider what risks God is asking of you to grow in your faith.- Is it to join something?- To quit something that's getting in the way of faith and family?- To be more generous with time, money, or effort? - To finally get that sacrament you've been delaying (marriage, confirmation)?

There are two concrete things that spring to mind - one for high schoolers and one for everyone:

First is World Youth Day in Seoul, South Korea in August of 2027.

We're taking a group and I know a lot of parents and teens are uneasy about the distance or perhaps the cost. Well, Seoul itself is a [very safe city, one of the safest in the world](#). Airline travel is [safer than driving](#). The group we're using is [reputable and safe](#). John Listi and I are leading this trip. We have individually and together taken many many trips with youth and are quite experienced at keeping it safe and navigating the unexpected. There is always some risk, but this is literally a once-in-a-lifetime experience and I'm confident that it's worth it.

As for the cost, we've already raised 10s of thousands of dollars and are raising more still - we're probably going to be able to reduce the cost per person by as much as half (down to \$2,200 from \$4,400). I've seen time and again that when people respond to God's invitation and step out, he provides. God cannot be outdone in generosity. Money "wasted" on going to encounter Christ in other kids, other cultures, and in the gathering of millions around the Pope is actually a great spiritual investment.

Give it one more chance in prayer and conversation. If there's even the tiniest nudge in your heart that this is something you should consider, please take the risk! **But time is running out. We need to know by Thursday. If your child and/or you want to come, contact John Listi immediately - JohnVListi@stmmabbeville.com**

We're going either way, but by the end of this week, we have to commit to a certain group size and won't be able to add more. The [itinerary is here](#) if you want more specifics (the "book now" button won't work anymore - use the email for John above).



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The second specific suggestion is much closer to home. In fact, it *is your home*. I'm talking about the importance of hospitality for evangelization.

Change is coming. Big change. We can no longer count on *momentum* to keep our Catholic, family-oriented small town the way we like it. In this case, it isn't about taking a risk - the risk is happening no matter what - it's about leaning into it to make it the right kind of risk.

If we want our community to hold its values, we have to *spread them* as people come in and changes happen. The best way to do that is through personal relationships and grassroots networking. The Roman Empire was converted by families hosting other families and Christians caring for the poor, not by programs and Mass schedules. How well do you know your literal next-door neighbors? How well do you recognize the people on your block? I personally will do everything in my power to keep our Catholic faith and family culture healthy and predominant in our area, but in truth the real results will come from the community itself.

I invite you... I challenge you to try to practice hospitality. It doesn't have to be complicated: invite 1 or 2 families you're close to and 1 or 2 families/neighbors you don't know well to a simple "open porch" or "front yard" event. A single opening prayer, potluck food, time spent together. Do it regularly. Check out this conversation about what that could look like: <https://youtu.be/MQCyyW8j3EI?si=rzP2GnG7gm85IZ7x&t=7977>

That risk could open a lot of hearts to grace. It could become bible studies and rosary groups and invitations to weekend Masses, but it starts with simply being neighborly and hospitable.

I'll do it too. I do still have ways for you to invite me over if you call the office. Still, when I return from retreat next week, I'll look for a night in November, pick a few families, provide some food, ask y'all to bring more food, and see what happens. Maybe you'll all turn me down. Maybe it will be awkward. Maybe we won't have enough food or too much. Maybe I'll spread myself too thin. These are all real risks.

But they're risks worth taking because My Lord took an even bigger risk on me.

- In Christ,

Fr. Alexander Albert

Pastor, Vermilion Catholic, a legacy of Mt. Carmel

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